

DEPT. DISTRIBUTION				DEPARTMENT OF STATE		POL 17 ISR-FR	
ORIGIN/ADDRESS				Original to be Filed in _____ Decentralized Files.		FILE DESIGNATION	
INR/B-10							
RS/R	REP	AF	ARA	CONFIDENTIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		CA-4576	
5	FE	7	CU				
INR	E	P	IO	HANDLING INDICATOR		NO.	
5							
L	PBO	AID	OC/T	TO : Amembassy PARIS			
				INFO : BONN, TEL AVIV			
AGR	COM	FRB	INT	FROM : Department of State		DATE:	
LAB	TAR	TR	XMB	SUBJECT : Israeli Ambassador to Paris, Asher Ben Natan			
AIR	ARMY	NAVY	OSD	REF : Tel Aviv's A-276 of August 5, 1970			
USIA	NSA	CIA					
3							
SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION				<p>The following information on Asher Ben Natan is submitted in reply to referenced airgram.</p> <p>Asher Ben Natan, named Ambassador to France in August 1970, has been referred to on occasion as a living legend. He has had a varied career in intelligence and diplomacy. Just prior to his present assignment he served as Israel's first Ambassador to West Germany.</p> <p>Ben Natan was born in Vienna on February 15, 1921. There he attended the Hebrew Hayut Secondary School. At the age of nine he joined the Maccabi Hatzair youth movement and at 18 left in a small boat for Palestine with other members of the organization. He settled first in Ein Harod, where he received agricultural training. He later moved to Davrat in Lower Galilee. At the outbreak of World War II he joined the Haganah. Ben Natan worked with the information service of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in 1944. In that capacity he gathered intelligence information from East European immigrants.</p> <p>In October 1945 Ben Natan returned to Europe with several other young men in a small boat. His mission was two-fold: to look for Nazi war criminals and to help Jewish refugees immigrate to Palestine. Disguised as an English journalist, Ben Natan traveled under the name of Arthur Feier. In post-war Europe the mysterious "Arthur" became</p>			
POST ROUTING				<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">           GROUP I            Excluded from automatic downgrading            and declassification  <b>CS COPY</b> </div>			
TO: Action Info. Initials							
AMB/PO				<div style="float: right; transform: rotate(90deg);">             COPY TO PRR              11 AUG 27 1970           </div>			
DCM							
POL							
ECON							
CONS							
ADM							
AID							
USIS							
FILE							
Action Taken:							
D ite:				FORM 10-64 DS-323			
Initials:				CONFIDENTIAL			
Drafted by: INR/OIL/B-MGlauch:gpd				Drafting Date: 08/24/70		Phone No.:	
Clearances:				Contents and Classification Approved by: INR/OIL/B-PEHuff			
INR/OIL/CS-DSimmons				NEA/IAI - DTMorrison (in substance)			
INR/DDM-MKStanley				EUR/FBX-BFHarding (in substance)			

FOR COORDINATION WITH State

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCE/METHOD/EXEMPTION 3B2E  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2006

CONFIDENTIAL

2

the subject of much interest. Ben Natan was reputedly responsible for the emigration of 100,000 Jews from Austria, Germany, Poland and Hungary. He also managed to secure a picture of Adolf Eichmann which contributed to the capture of the war criminal.

Ben Natan returned to Israel in 1947 and lived for a time on a kibbutz. When statehood was declared, he became responsible for the formation of the Political Division of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In 1948-49 he served as the Political Department's representative in Europe. He attended the College of International Relations in Geneva from 1951 to 1953. Upon his return to Israel he was named to the Administrative Council of Incode, a meat packing company operating in Africa. He used the position to establish ties between Israel and the states of sub-Sahara Africa.

Ben Natan became chief of the Defense Ministry mission in Europe in 1957. Stationed in Paris, he clandestinely purchased arms from both the French and West Germans. Ben Natan was named acting director general of the Ministry of Defense in June 1959 and director general of the Ministry in February 1960. From July 1965 to December 1969 he served as Ambassador to Bonn. He was quite popular with the Germans. On various occasions he was heckled by radical student groups and Arab residents of West Germany.

The tall, silver-haired Ambassador is considered a perfect gentleman who has a talent for interpersonal relations. He has an enormous capacity for work, a quick grasp of detail and great powers of persuasion. Ben Natan enjoys music, art, literature and sports (tennis and skiing). His wife, Erika, was born in Vienna. In the late 1940's she worked with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. The Ben Natan's have two children. Ben Natan smokes cigars. He speaks fluent Hebrew, English and German.

The Department would appreciate any information which may become available during Natan's assignment in France.

JOHNSON, ACTING